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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BRUSSELS 005137

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SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR'S INTRODUCTORY CALL ON EP U.S.
SUBCOMMITTEE CHAIR

REF: BRUSSELS 5057

Classified By: USEU POLOFF TODD HUIZINGA, FOR REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D)

1. (C) SUMMARY: On November 30, Ambassador Schnabel paid an introductory call on Jonathan Evans, the Chairman of the European Parliament (EP) Subcommittee on Relations with the U.S. Evans suggested that an approach concentrating on the EU institutions in Brussels would be the most effective way for the U.S. to mend fences with Europe. Evans predicted that EU Trade Commissioner Peter Mandelson would become the transatlantic point man in the new European Commission. Under the right circumstances Evans, the leader of the UK Conservatives in the EP, could prove a capable U.S. Subcommittee Chairman. END SUMMARY.

TARGET BRUSSELS TO MEND FENCES WITH EUROPE

2. (C) Evans, who was elected Chairman of the EP, s Delegation for Relations with the United States in September, took the opportunity afforded by the Ambassador, s call to outline his take on the best way for the U.S. to mend fences with Europe. He said the U.S. approach should concentrate on the EU institutions in Brussels. Stressing that he, as a UK Conservative, was neither a believer in further EU integration nor a multilateralist as opposed to a bilateralist, Evans explained that major visits by U.S. officials to EU member-state capitals that did not include discussions in Brussels would be perceived, rightly or wrongly, as exclusionary of EU member states that were not part of the itinerary. Making Brussels a priority would be perceived as including all of Europe and would strengthen the hand of the majority of EU member states that favor keeping good relations with the U.S. at the forefront of the EU agenda. In that context, Evans lauded President Bush, s plan to visit Brussels early next year.

MANDELSON WANTS SPECIAL TRANSATLANTIC ROLE

3. (C) Evans said he had met with new EU Trade Commissioner Peter Mandelson soon after he had become the UK Commissioner-designate. Evans said he and Mandelson had long enjoyed a mutually respectful personal acquaintance despite their political rivalry in the UK. Echoing what Mandelson himself had told the Ambassador (reftel), Evans reported that Mandelson was adamant about his intention to be the Barroso Commission, s point person on transatlantic relations. Considering Mandelson, s political and tactical skills, Evans assessed Mandelson, s chances a very good of wresting center stage regarding relations with the U.S. from External Relations Commissioner Benita Ferrero-Waldner. Mandelson, s principal challenge, Evans predicted, would be avoiding being labeled as Blair, s man in Brussels.

BIO INFO ON EVANS

4. (C) Evans, 54, represents Wales in the European Parliament. He has been an MEP since 1999 and leader of the UK Conservatives in the EP since 2001. As EP Tory leader, Evans played a key role in the election of Jim Nicholson to the post of Chairman of the EP Subcommittee on the U.S. (Nicholson, an Ulster Unionist, is a member of the UK Tory group in the EP.) Evans worked hard behind the scenes to become Nicholson, s successor before stepping down as EP Tory leader at the end of this year. A lawyer by trade, Evans was an MP in the House of Commons from 1992-97. From 1992-94 he served as parliamentary private secretary in the UK Northern Ireland Office, and he often refers to his experience during those years as one of the likely targets of IRA terrorism. From 1994-95 Evans was Corporate Affairs Minister in the UK Department of Trade and Industry. In 1997, he was appointed Conservative spokesman for Wales. Evans is intelligent and articulate. He is a dedicated transatlanticist, but often is quite sensitive about what he believes are unfair U.S. attitudes toward Europe and Europeans. He says, for example, that as a former target of IRA terrorism largely funded by sources in the U.S. he resents Republican accusations

that Europeans are soft on terrorism.⁸ Also, in conversations with U.S. officials he has expressed exasperation about the contrast he perceives between UK Prime Minister Blair,s closeness to President Bush and his (Evans,) belief that UK Conservative leader Michael Howard has been &frozen out of the White House.⁸

15. (C) COMMENT: In Evans, the EP has found a U.S. Delegation Chairman who is capable, intelligent and ambitious. Whether his chairmanship will yield positive results will depend both on how able he proves in overcoming constraints placed on him by less transatlantically minded committee members, and on our success in leveraging his position to get results when we engage the EP on issues of interest to us. END COMMENT.

MCKINLEY